

1. Love After Love

Derek Walcott, St. Lucia

*The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror
and each will smile at the other's welcome,*

*and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you*

*all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,*

*the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.*

2. THE FORCE THAT THROUGH THE GREEN FUSE DRIVES THE FLOWER, Dylan Thomas, Ireland

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower

Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees

Is my destroyer.

And I am dumb to tell the crooked rose

My youth is bent by the same wintry fever.

The force that drives the water through the rocks

Drives my red blood; that dries the mouthing streams

Turns mine to wax.

And I am dumb to mouth unto my veins

How at the mountain spring the same mouth sucks.

The hand that whirls the water in the pool

Stirs the quicksand; that ropes the blowing wind

Hauls my shroud sail.

And I am dumb to tell the hanging man

How of my clay is made the hangman's lime.

The lips of time leech to the fountain head;

Love drips and gathers, but the fallen blood

Shall calm her sores.

And I am dumb to tell a weather's wind

How time has ticked a heaven round the stars.

And I am dumb to tell the lover's tomb, How at my sheet goes the same crooked worm.

3. from ***The City That Never Sleeps***

~Federico Garcia Lorca, Spain

In the sky there is nobody asleep. Nobody, nobody.

Nobody is asleep.

The creatures of the moon sniff and prowl about their cabins.

*The living iguanas will come and bite the men who do not dream,
and the man who rushes out with his spirit broken will meet on the street corner
the unbelievable alligator quiet beneath the tender protest of the
stars.*

Nobody is asleep on earth. Nobody, nobody.

Nobody is asleep.

*In a graveyard far off there is a corpse
who has moaned for three years
because of a dry countryside on his knee;
and that boy they buried this morning cried so much
it was necessary to call out the dogs to keep him quiet.*

Life is not a dream. Careful! Careful! Careful!

*We fall down the stairs in order to eat the moist earth
or we climb to the knife edge of the snow with the voices of the dead
dahlias.*

*But forgetfulness does not exist, dreams do not exist;
flesh exists. Kisses tie our mouths
in a thicket of new veins,
and whoever his pain pains will feel that pain forever
and whoever is afraid of death will carry it on his shoulders.*

4. **A Walk**

~Rainer Maria Rilke, Bohemia/Austria

My eyes already touch the sunny hill.

going far ahead of the road I have begun.

So we are grasped by what we cannot grasp;

it has inner light, even from a distance-

and charges us, even if we do not reach it,

into something else, which, hardly sensing it,

we already are; a gesture waves us on

answering our own wave...

but what we feel is the wind in our faces.

5. Civilian and Soldier

~Wole Soyinka, Nigeria

*My apparition rose from the fall of lead,
Declared, 'I am a civilian.' It only served
To aggravate your fright. For how could I
Have risen, a being of this world, in that hour
Of impartial death! And I thought also: nor is
Your quarrel of this world.*

*You stood still
For both eternities, and oh I heard the lesson
Of your training sessions, cautioning -
Scorch earth behind you, do not leave
A dubious neutral to the rear. Reiteration
Of my civilian quandary, burrowing earth
From the lead festival of your more eager friends
Worked the worse on your confusion, and when
You brought the gun to bear on me, and death
Twitched me gently in the eye, your plight
And all of you came clear to me.*

*I hope some day
Intent upon my trade of living, to be checked
In stride by your apparition in a trench,
Signalling, I am a soldier. No hesitation then
But I shall shoot you clean and fair
With meat and bread, a gourd of wine
A bunch of breasts from either arm, and that
Lone question - do you friend, even now, know
What it is all about?*

6. I came here, in idleness

~Anna Akhmatova, Russia

I came here, in idleness

Where I'm bored: all the same to me!

A sleepy hilltop mill, yes,

here years pass silently.

Over convolvulus gone dry

the bee swims past, ahead,

I call to that mermaid by

the pond: the mermaid's dead.

Thick with mud, and rusted,

the wide pond's shallows:

over the trembling aspen

a weightless moon glows.

I see everything freshly.

The poplars smell moist.

I'm silent. Silent, ready

to be yours again, earth.

7. Living is a Fire

~ Ben Okri, Nigeria

*Living is a cross
That any one of the rock-faces
Comprehends.*

*We are drawn
To many seas.
We drown wholesomely
In the failures of confrontation.
The rain
Drenching
Our doorsteps
Has nothing to do
With the simplest desires
And lacerations
We bring
To the smallest acts
Of living.*

*The child
On the broken catwalk
Hearing the sounds of our hunger
Without understanding
Throws echoes back
To the earliest abandonments
Of love.*

*Minor devastations preceding
Horror*

*Resonate the ineffable.
The mothers that wake
At the slightest sound
And the fathers that
Smoke all night
And the rest of us who are
Vigilantes from the demons
Of oppressed sleep
Find at dawn the clearest
Images of bewilderment.
Even the best things
Collapse beneath the weight
Of ignorance.*

*Living is a fire
That any one of the wave-lashes
Comprehends.*

8. from **Love poetry**

~ Rumi, Persia

look at love
how it tangles
with the one fallen in love
look at spirit
how it fuses with earth
giving it new life
why are you so busy
with this or that or good or bad
pay attention to how things blend
why talk about all
the known and the unknown
see how the unknown merges into the known
why think separately
of this life and the next
when one is born from the last
look at your heart and tongue
one feels but deaf and dumb
the other speaks in words and signs
look at water and fire
earth and wind
enemies and friends all at once
the wolf and the lamb
the lion and the deer
far away yet together
look at the unity of this
spring and winter
manifested in the equinox
you too must mingle my friends
since the earth and the sky
are mingled just for you and me
be like sugarcane
sweet yet silent
don't get mixed up with bitter words
my beloved grows
right out of my own heart
how much more union can there be

9. *Haiku*
Basho, Japan

<i>Along this road Goes no one; This autumn evening.</i>	<i>The butterfly is perfuming Its wings in the scent Of the orchid.</i>
<i>From time to time The clouds give rest To the moon beholders..</i>	<i>Yes, spring has come This morning a nameless hill Is shrouded in mist.</i>

10. ***Artificial Flowers***, *C.P. Cavafy (Greece)*

*I don't want real narcissi - neither lilies
nor real roses please me,
decorating trite and common gardens. I am grieved,
fatigued, afflicted by their flesh
their perishable beauty bores me.*

*Give me artificial flowers - porcelain and metal glories - neither
fading nor decaying, forms unaging.
Flowers of the splendid gardens of another place,
where Forms and Styles and Knowledge dwell.*

*I love flowers made of glass or gold,
true Art's true gifts,
their painted hues more beautiful than nature's,
worked in nacre and enamel,
with perfect leaves and branches.*

*Their charm derives from wise and pure Good Taste;
they didn't vilely sprout in dust or mud.
If they lack scent, we'll pour out perfume,
burn romantic myrrh before them.*

